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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 000129

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [UNAUT](#) [UNMIK](#) [OSCE](#) [AJ](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: LIKELY AZERBAIJANI REACTION  
TO KOSOVO INDEPENDENCE

REF: A. STATE 13716

[1](#)B. STATE 14284

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse per 1.4. (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador delivered reftel points on Kosovo's anticipated declaration of independence in a February 12 meeting with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov (other topics septel). Noting that he had discussed this issue with EUR Assistant Secretary Fried in Munich, Mammadyarov said he understands that Kosovo's independence is "inevitable." However, Mammadyarov said he asked that the State Department issue a statement that indicates clearly that Kosovo is not a precedent for unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus and Moldova. Mammadyarov prefers that the statement be issued by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs but said he understands that the Russians may not support such a statement. In that case, Mammadyarov asked that the U.S. consider issuing a bilateral statement. Mammadyarov plans to raise this issue in a February 13 conversation with French Foreign Minister Kouchner. Mammadyarov added that he also seeks a strong affirmation in the NATO Bucharest Summit statement (building on the language in the Riga Statement on frozen conflicts) indicating that regional conflicts should be resolved on the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. He said the GOAJ has already raised this issue with the Turks. The Ambassador noted that U.S. policy clearly states that we do not consider Kosovo a precedent for other conflicts, and promised to convey Mammadyarov's request to Washington.

[1](#)2. (C) In response to the Ambassador's request that Azerbaijan not support any OSCE action on Kosovo, Mammadyarov said that he "cannot promise not to support OSCE action." He was noncommittal on the Berlin Mechanism, saying that he needs to "look into Serbian initiatives at the OSCE." Referring to Serbian initiatives at the OSCE, Mammadyarov commented wryly that the OSCE is "not a workable organization, so what difference would it make?" The Ambassador reiterated that support for invocation of the Berlin Mechanism would be counterproductive to managing an issue key to stability in Southeast Europe and Euro-Atlantic integration for Serbia.

[1](#)3. (C) Stressing that the GOAJ must think about potentially strong domestic reaction to Kosovo's independence, Mammadyarov said that he must take steps to demonstrate that Azerbaijan does not accept the Kosovo solution as a precedent for Nagorno Karabakh. As a first step, Mammadyarov said that he personally will take action to initiate the withdrawal of Azerbaijani peacekeeping troops from Kosovo, as Kosovo's

independence "violates the territorial integrity language of UNSCR 1244." (Mammadyarov assured the Ambassador that he did not seek to diminish Azerbaijan's peacekeeping capacity and would consider sending the troops to Afghanistan or Iraq.) When the Ambassador disputed his argument about UNSCR 1244, Mammadyarov conceded that the relevant language was included in the resolution's preamble and related to Kosovo's interim status but said again that he must do "something" for Azerbaijan's domestic audience. Stating that "the biggest difficulty for us is that Kosovo is creating another Albanian state," Mammadyarov said he is also considering steps in the UN -- "either the GUAM resolution or our own resolution" -- to clearly demonstrate that Azerbaijan does not consider Kosovo a precedent for other conflicts. Mammadyarov also plans to issue a statement underscoring that Kosovo's independence does not set a precedent for other unresolved conflicts.

14. (C) Comment: Senior Azerbaijani officials - including President Aliyev - have repeatedly expressed serious concern that Kosovo's independence could set a precedent for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. They are looking to the U.S. and the other OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs for a strong, early affirmation of our long-standing policy that Kosovo does not set a precedent for other conflicts. We recommend that the Department consider issuing a statement to this effect, with or without the other Co-Chairs, and underscore this point in public comments on Kosovo whenever possible, as we will do here.

15. (C) Comment Continued: Separately, the French Charge asked the Ambassador to join a Quint demarche on the GOAJ regarding Serbia's plans to invoke the Berlin Mechanism. Other Quint Ambassadors in Baku have expressed concern that the demarche could prove counterproductive, given

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Azerbaijan's strong concerns about the implications of Kosovo's independence for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Because we have already delivered ref b points regarding the Berlin Mechanism, unless instructed otherwise, we plan to tell the French that we will not join the Quint demarche.  
DERSE